

# City of Santa Barbara California

## PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

**REPORT DATE:** May 2, 2006  
**AGENDA DATE:** May 11, 2006  
**SUBJECT:** Project Recommendation for California Public Utilities Commission Rule 20A Utility Undergrounding  
**TO:** Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Public Works, Engineering Division, (805) 564-5372  
 Homer F. Smith II, Principal Engineer *HFS*

### Background

The purpose of today's report is to present to the Planning Commission the staff recommendation for the project to be accomplished for California Public Utility Commission Rule 20A Utility Undergrounding, as part of the City's Fiscal Year 2007 Capital Improvement Program. Rule 20A projects are undergrounding projects paid for with Southern California Edison (SCE) rate-payer funds.

On January 12, 2006, the Planning Commission received a report on proposed prioritization methods for selecting projects for CPUC Rule 20A Utility Undergrounding. The Planning Commission directed staff to select and prioritize several projects, and to return to present the top priority project at a future date.

CPUC Rule 20A details four criteria for potential Rule 20A projects; however, only one criterion needs to be met for a proposed project to be eligible. Since SCE rate-payer funds are used to fund the projects, SCE determines if a proposed project meets one of the following criteria:

- Location is an arterial or major collector road;
- Location has an unusually heavy concentration of overhead lines;
- Location is heavily traveled; and/or
- Location is a civic, recreational or scenic area

Cities and counties receive annual allocations (based on a calendar year), which are held in escrow by SCE. Santa Barbara's current annual allocation is \$596,000, and the current balance is \$2,200,000. This includes the amount allocated for January 2006. The method to determine how much funding a locale receives is based on a formula that compares above ground facilities to underground facilities. The more a locale undergrounds, the less they

receive in future allocations.

SCE also permits municipalities to mortgage up to five years of allocations. There are benefits associated with mortgaging, in that it affords the opportunity to accomplish larger scope projects and avoid repetitive mobilization costs for smaller dollar value projects. This can maximize the use of current dollars and offset future construction cost inflation. However, the negative side of mortgaging is that there are extended periods of time between projects until the annual allocation accrues to a positive balance.

For example, with the City's current balance of \$2.2 million, a five year mortgage would increase the funds allowable by approximately another \$3 million (5 years X \$596,000). Thus, the City could accomplish a \$5.2 million project.

However, using the maximum amount available would negate any reserve that could be used for "opportunity projects." For example, when the last major Rule 20A project was conducted on Milpas Street in 1995, the maximum mortgage value available was not used. This reserve allowed for some smaller utility undergrounding projects (Castillo and Montecito Streets, and Fairview Avenue and Hollister Avenue intersection with Highway 101) when other major improvements were accomplished at those locations. Staff recommends that this approach be used for the FY 2007 Capital Improvement Project. Staff recommends sizing this project such that there is some reserve. A potential opportunity project where this concept could be used is the Haley and De La Vina Streets bridge replacement scheduled for construction in 2007. Undergrounding utilities in conjunction with construction of the bridge replacement would greatly enhance this intersection for traffic safety. The project also meets Rule 20A criteria.

Upon the recommendation of the Planning Commission, and subsequent approval by Council for the Rule 20A FY 2007 CIP project, the next step is for Council to pass a Resolution (per our Municipal Code Chapter 22.40) creating an Underground Utility District (UUD). That resolution, by definition, requires removal of all overhead facilities, and precludes further construction of new overhead facilities. Telephone and cable companies' facilities are required to be undergrounded at their own cost. Typically, they place their undergrounded lines in the same trench used by SCE. The City has completed nine (9) previous UUD's, and the FY 2007 CIP project will be UUD #10 (see attachments for the list of previous UUD's, and the UUD proposed for this project).

SCE reports that the time required to accomplish a Rule 20A project is 3-4 years. This includes project design, coordination with the other utilities (telephone and cable), construction and connection to structures, and subsequent removal of the overhead system. The debit from the account to pay for the project is at completion of the project.

## **Discussion**

### **Staff Committee**

As previously mentioned, the Planning Commission directed staff to select and prioritize several projects, and to return to present the top priority project at a future date. A prioritization matrix (attached) was also presented, and the Planning Commission made several recommendations for additional factors to address in the matrix.

Following the Planning Commission direction, a staff committee (Committee) of four was identified: Jan Hubbell and Debra Andaloro from Planning, Mike Grimes for Public Works Facilities, and Homer Smith from Public Works Engineering. At the initial meeting, the revised Prioritization Matrix was explained and provided to Committee members. The next step was a comprehensive tour of the City.

### **Tour**

A citywide tour was conducted, with a focus on Cliff Drive, Mission Street, De la Vina Street, and the San Andres/Micheltorena Streets intersection. Other areas included the SCE transformer station to demonstrate the difference between transmission power lines (voltage in excess of 60,000 volts), and distribution power lines (highest distribution lines in Santa Barbara is 30,000 volts). Examples of previous Rule 20A projects were also visited (Milpas Street, State Street, etc.).

### **Project Discussion**

The Committee then individually tallied their recommendations for project prioritization recommendations using the matrix. At a subsequent meeting, individual recommendations were discussed and a top priority was agreed upon.

### **Project Selection**

The top priority project is Cliff Drive, at the Meigs Road intersection. The project extends east and west from Meigs Road, and also includes two power poles on Meigs Road north of Cliff Drive adjacent to the shopping complex, and one pole on the south side of Cliff Drive. It is anticipated that the project would extend east to Fire Station No. 6, and west to Camino Calma. This project is estimated to cost between \$3.5 and \$4.0 million. There may be some additional parcels in the east/west directions based SCE's final estimate, existing placement of poles and SCE's recommendations for logical transition points. (See attachments of the map and aerial view photo for the outline of the proposed new UUD.)

Selection rationale for Cliff/Meigs was based on the following factors:

- Fully meets all of the Rule 20A criteria in that it's an arterial road, is heavily traveled, has a high density of overhead lines, and is a scenic area
- The area has great visual sensitivity
- The road is used by a heavy load of both commercial and tourist traffic
- Meets City policies for enhanced traffic safety and pedestrian safety
- The area is within the coastal zone
- The area has previously completed environmental review for proposed improvements

Staff is hiring a consultant who recently retired as SCE's engineer and planner for Santa Barbara to assist with a better cost estimate and assistance with defining the UUD, which will be addressed in the Council Resolution.

The second priority project is also on Cliff Drive, starting at Flora Vista Drive and proceeding east to Camino Calma, or possibly Meigs Road if the \$3.5 - \$4.0 million will achieve that distance. Selection rationale was identical to that above, and was rated second because there was more residential and less commercial occupancy.

The third priority is Mission Street, from Bath Street to and across State Street. These three blocks are predominantly commercial and prioritization was based on the following criteria:

- Fully meets the Rule 20A criteria in that it's very heavily traveled, has a high density of overhead lines, and is a major arterial road
- The road is used by a heavy load of both commercial and tourist traffic
- The road is the gateway to the Santa Barbara Mission
- Meets City policies for enhanced traffic safety and pedestrian safety

The Mission Street project is estimated to cost between \$4.0 and \$.5 million.

### **Next Steps**

With the Planning Commission's concurrence and approval, the Cliff Drive and Meigs Road intersection utility undergrounding project will be recommended to Council for inclusion in the FY 2007 Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Following Council's approval of the project, staff will prepare a Resolution for Council's approval, declaring the project area as a Utility Undergrounding District. This proscribes any future overhead facilities within the project area, and is the point at which SCE commences design.

Planning Commission Staff Report

Project Recommendation for California Public Utilities Commission Rule 20A Utility  
Undergrounding

May 11, 2006

Page 5 of 5

Attachments:

- (1) Prior City UUD's
- (2) Prioritization Matrix
- (3) Proposed project UUD map and aerial photo

## History of Underground Utility Districts in the City (Rule 20A)

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <b>1972</b> | City established the first of nine Underground Utility Districts (UUD) for Rule 20A projects (Santa Barbara & Anacapa Sts., & De La Guerra & Ortega Sts.) |
| <b>1977</b> | UUD #2 (Santa Barbara St., from Sola to Carrillo Sts.)  |
| <b>1977</b> | UUD #3 (Miramonte Dr. from Carrillo St. to Mountain Dr.)  |
| <b>1983</b> | UUD #4 (Carrillo St. from De La Vina St. to Hwy #101)   |
| <b>1986</b> | UUD #5 (Santa Barbara & Chapala Sts., & Gutierrez & Ortega Sts.)  |
| <b>1988</b> | UUD #6 (portions of Garden & Haley Sts.)  |
| <b>1995</b> | UUD #7 (Milpas St. from Cabrillo Ave. to Anapamu St.)   |
| <b>1995</b> | UUD #8 (Castillo & Montecito Sts. Intersection and adjacent areas)  |
| <b>1995</b> | UUD #9 (Fairview intersection with Hwy#101 and Hollister Rd.)   |

# CPUC Rule 20A

## Prioritization Matrix

**Project Location/increment:**

	<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Value (+/-/Neutral)</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
<b>A</b>	<b>CPUC Rule 20A</b>	<b>Yes or No only</b>	
<b>B</b>	<b>Municipal Code</b>		
<b>C</b>	<b>City Policies (Circ. Element, safety, etc.)</b>		
<b>D</b>	<b>Transit type Commercial Tourist</b>		
<b>E</b>	<b>Cost</b>		
<b>F</b>	<b>Other Historic relevance Efficiency Balance</b>		
	<b>Total</b>		

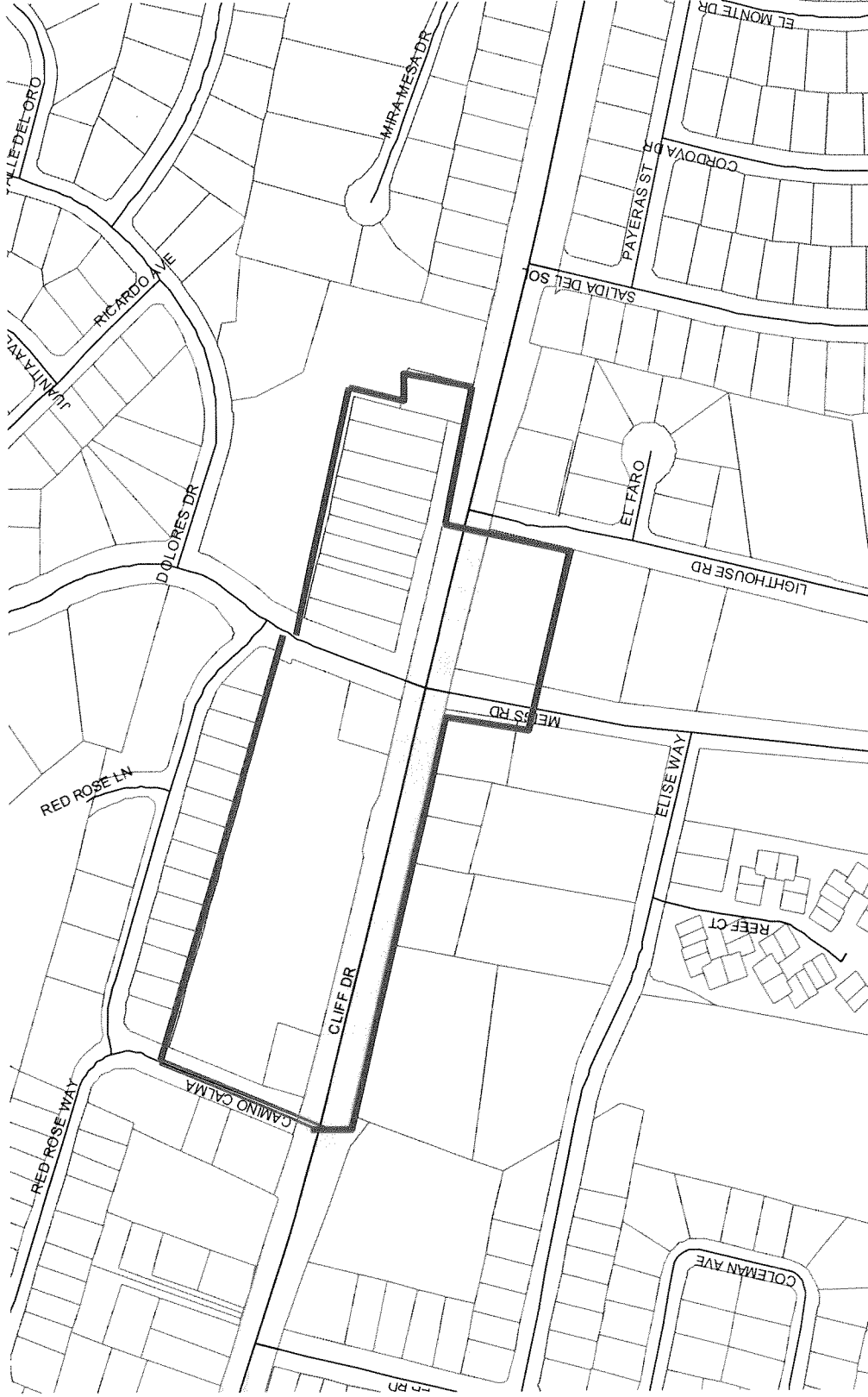
**Scoring:**

**A - Criteria of CPUC Rule 20A must be “Yes” to continue as a project  
B through F – Scored as “+”, “-”, or “Neutral”**

- **Municipal Code applies to primarily City street extensions by the City, not land developments (e.g.: Garden St.)**
- **City Policies include compliance with documents such as the Circulation Element, and policy such as pedestrian safety, vehicle safety, reducing visual congestion at busy intersections, etc. Can be multiple “+”**
- **Transit type acknowledges commercial or tourist travel areas, or both. Can be multiple “+”**
- **Cost to underground versus the benefit derived, (e.g.: a higher cost project that provides greater end result can outscore a lower cost project; or starting at an end point yields same benefit as starting at a mid point and costs less)**
- **Other**
  - **Historic relevance acknowledges a landmark that would be enhanced by undergrounding**
  - **Efficiency – includes added benefit, such as an adjacent capital improvement (e.g.: Cottage Hospital)**
  - **Balance – addresses location of projects throughout the City**
  - **Can be multiple “+”**
- **Projects with most “+” are highest priority**

# Cliff Drive and Meigs Road

## Proposed Underground Utility District





# Cliff Drive at Meigs Road Intersection Top Priority Project

